

3

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# MARCOS DECLARES HE'LL CALL A VOTE EARLY NEXT YEAR

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MANILA, Nov. 3 — President Ferdinand E. Marcos announced today that he intended to call for an early presidential election to settle what he called a "silly claim" that his Government is inept.

His announcement in an American television interview followed pressure from Washington for changes in his country's policies, and seemed to reverse earlier assertions that he planned to serve out his six-year term, which ends in 1987, without an election.

After the interview on the ABC News program "This Week," he told reporters he would like to begin the campaign in December and hold the vote on Jan. 17.

## Parliament's Approval

But he said such questions would first be discussed at a caucus of party leaders next weekend. And he was careful to say, at each mention of his plan, that it would be subject to the decision of the Parliament, the Batasan. It would be possible for the legislature, heavily dominated by Marcos followers, to block an election if he so desired.

[In Washington, the Philippine Embassy issued a news release confirming that Mr. Marcos intended to hold elections next January. The embassy also issued the text of a planned presidential decree that would allow Mr. Marcos to call a special election without resigning from office. Opposition politicians have charged that as long as he stays in office Mr. Marcos has the power to rig the elections.]

## Broadcast in Philippines

Asked during the program if an election could now be expected in January or February, Mr. Marcos said: "Yes, if I can convince the Batasan, and I think I can. We control two-thirds of the membership."

The interview from Malacanang Palace was broadcast live in the Philip-

pines on the Government television station.

The President said he expected the candidate of the moderate opposition coalition to be either former Senator Salvador H. Laurel or Corazon Aquino, the widow of the slain opposition leader Benigno S. Aquino Jr.

He told his television interviewers that American members of Congress and others would be invited to observe the voting, and he called allegations of fraud in previous elections "sour grapes" and "a publicity stunt."

"If all these childish claims to popularity on both sides have to be settled, I think we'd better settle it by calling an election right now, or say give everybody 60 days to campaign and to bring the issues to the people," he said. "I'm ready, I'm ready."

He told reporters he did not want to include a vice presidential candidate in the early election, which he said should be confined to the question of his own mandate.

American pressure on him for elections is largely aimed at establishing a successor, something Mr. Marcos has resisted.

Responding to questions, Mr. Marcos implied that his promised reinstatement of Gen. Fabian C. Ver as Chief of Staff of the armed forces was likely to be temporary. He has been strongly urged by Americans not to reinstate General Ver. if, as expected, the general is acquitted of involvement in Mr. Aquino's assassination.

"I have given my word of honor that if he is acquitted he will be reinstated, but I never promised how long he was going to stay," Mr. Marcos said.

Mr. Marcos also denied American reports that the Soviet Union has increased the size of its embassy in the Philippines, and said there is no evidence that the Russians have attempted to make contact with insurgents.

## Probing Americans' Killings

The President also denied a charge by the American Ambassador, Stephen W. Bosworth, that the killers of 15 Americans who have died here over the last two years had not been brought to justice.

"All these cases have been investigated," he said, adding that if light sentences were passed in some cases, that was the prerogative of an independent judiciary.

American pressure on Mr. Marcos has mounted sharply in the last two weeks since a visit here by Senator Paul Laxalt, Republican of Nevada, a personal envoy of President Reagan, who brought a message of concern that Mr. Marcos is failing to deal with his nation's crises.

In the last week, Congressional and Administration officials in Washington have reported that the Communist insurgency is growing rapidly and that the country is headed toward civil war. They have said they are dissatisfied with Mr. Marcos's responses to their warnings. The chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, Dave Durenberger, Republican of Minnesota, went so far last Friday as to call on Mr. Marcos to step down.

Many of Mr. Marcos's American critics have urged him to call early elections, to give his opponents a legitimate avenue of expression and to gain a public mandate for his continued leadership.

## Election Mention in August

In early August, Mr. Marcos said he was considering calling an election this year, but later that month appeared to have decided against it.

Opposition politicians have remained skeptical and have continued to prepare for an announcement like the one made tonight.

Under existing regulations, Mr. Marcos would have to step down as President before calling for early elections.

He seemed to open the possibility of a different procedure, however, when he said it might be sufficient for the Parliament to include new wording in a pending election code for early elections.

Under current wording, he said, early elections can be called if the President is permanently disabled, dies, is removed from office or resigns.

A fifth instance could be added to allow a sitting President to bring a fundamental issue to a vote, as in a parliamentary system, he said.

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